

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 LONDON 10614 01 OF 02 271633Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /059 W
-----100130 271646Z /46

R 271619Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5579
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION NATO
AMCONSUL BELFAST
AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 10614

USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY
USOECD ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PINT, UK, EC
SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT PUBLISHES DIRECT ELECTIONS BILL

REF: LONDON 9853

SUMMARY - THE GOVERNMENT JUNE 24 PUBLISHED ITS LONG-AWAITED BILL FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY. IT CONTAINED NO SURPRISES. ALTHOUGH RECOMMENDING THE REGIONAL LIST SYSTEM OF PROPORTIONAL
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 LONDON 10614 01 OF 02 271633Z

REPRESENTATION (PR), THE BILL WAS DRAFTED SO THAT THE TRADITIONAL BRITISH FIRST-PAST-THE-POST (FPTP) ELECTORAL SYSTEM CAN BE ADOPTED AND INCORPORATED IN THE BILL BY A SINGLE AMENDMENT. EC ELECTIONS IN BRITAIN BEFORE 1980, HOWEVER, SEEM UNLIKELY. THE GOVERNMENT'S RECOMMENDATION OF A PR SYSTEM, TOGETHER WITH THE FACT THAT THE BILL WILL HAVE TO BE CARRIED OVER TO THE NEXT

SESSION OF PARLIAMENT, PROVIDES A STRONG INCENTIVE FOR THE LIBERAL PARTY TO RENEW ITS PACT WITH THE GOVERNMENT THIS FALL. END SUMMARY.

1. THE GOVERNMENT JUNE 24 PUBLISHED ITS BILL PROVING FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS OF DELAY AND EQUIVOCATION, DUE PARTICULARLY TO ELECTORAL SYSTEM ISSUE AND TO DIVISIONS WITHIN THE CABINET. WITH CALLAGHAN'S EARLIER DECISION TO ALLOW A FREE VOTE ON THE PRINCIPLE OF DIRECT ELECTIONS AS WELL AS THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM (REFTEL), THESE PROBLEMS WERE OVERCOME. THE BILL IS EXPECTED TO BE INTRODUCED IN PARLIAMENT THIS WEEK, BUT IT STANDS NO REAL CHANCE OF PASSAGE IN THE CURRENT SESSION -- PARLIAMENT IS EXPECTED TO RISE IN MID-JULY AND RETURN FOR ABOUT TWO WEEKS IN MID-OCTOBER TO CONCLUDE LEGISLATION THAT IS NOW IN ADVANCED STAGES. THE DIRECT ELECTIONS BILL, ACCORDINGLY, WILL HAVE TO BE REINTRODUCED WHEN THE NEXT SESSION OPENS IN NOVEMBER, THOUGH SOME INITIAL STAGES OF COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION WILL NOT HAVE TO BE REPEATED.

2. THE DRAFT BILL CONTAINED NO SURPRISES, GENERALLY FOLLOWING THE GOVERNMENT'S ORIGINAL WHITE PAPER PROPOSALS. AS EXPECTED (REFTEL AND PREVIOUS), THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO RECOMMEND ADOPTION OF THE REGIONAL LIST

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 LONDON 10614 01 OF 02 271633Z

PR SYSTEM, BUT STRUCTURED THE BILL AND ITS SUPPLEMENTARY SCHEDULES IN SUCH A WAY THAT PARLIAMENT CAN ADOPT THE TRADITIONAL FPTP ELECTORAL SYSTEM BY SIMPLE AMENDMENT. WITH BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY COMMITTED TO A FREE VOTE ON THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM, THE ODDS ARE OVERWHELMINGLY IN FAVOR OF

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 LONDON 10614 02 OF 02 271632Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /059 W
-----100127 271646Z /46

R 271619Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5580
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION NATO
AMCONSUL BELFAST
AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 10614

EVENTUAL ADOPTION OF FPTP.

3. IF IT IS ASSUMED THAT PARLIAMENT WILL ADOPT THE FPTP ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND APPROVE THE BILL AROUND THE NEW YEAR' THERE IS LITTLE CHANCE OF BRITAIN BEING PREPARED TO HOLD ELECTIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY MUCH BEFORE 1980. THIS DELAY IS INHERENT IN THE FPTP SYSTEM WHICH INVOLVES A LABORIOUS PROCESS OF DRAWING UP 81 RELATIVELY BALANCED GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCIES AND AN ELABORATE, TWO-TIER SYSTEM PERMITTING THE VARIOUS PARTIES TO APPEAL THE MAKE-UP OF THESE CONSTITUENCIES.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 LONDON 10614 02 OF 02 271632Z

4. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THE DIRECT ELECTIONS BILL WILL PROVIDE A STRONG INCENTIVE FOR THE LIBERALS - WHO PLACE THE HIGHEST PRIORITY ON PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION -- TO RENEW THEIR CURRENT PACT WITH THE GOVERNMENT LATER THIS YEAR. ALTHOUGH THE LIBERALS CANNOT REALISTICALLY EXPECT PARLIAMENT TO APPROVE PR. PARTY LEADER STEEL CAN CLAIM SUCCESS IN BRING-ING THE ISSUE BEFORE PARLIAMENT, AN ACHIEVEMENT WITHOUT PRECEDENT. SINCE THE BILL WILL CARRY OVER INTO THE NEXT SESSION, STEEL WILL BE ABLE TO GO BEFORE THE ANNUAL LIBERAL CONFERENCE IN SEPTEMBER WITH A STRONG ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF RENEWAL OF THE ACCORD WITH THE

GOVERNMENT. AND IF THE DIRECT ELECTIONS BILL IS AN
EFFECTIVE CARROT, THE PROSPECT OF A GENERAL ELECTION MUST
BE AN EVEN MORE EFFECTIVE STICK.

BREWSTER

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION LAW, GOVERNMENT REFORM, ELECTIONS, LEGISLATIVE BILLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LONDON10614
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770229-0148
Format: TEL
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770615/aaaaamrc.tel
Line Count: 175
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1e58da75-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 LONDON 9853
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2023136
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOVERNMENT PUBLISHES DIRECT ELECTIONS BILL
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PINT, UK, EC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1e58da75-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009